Serious and Seasonable EXHORTATIONS TO THE CLERGY OF *ENGLAND.*

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Serious and Seasonable

EXHORTATIONS

TO THE

Reverend Clergy

OF

ENGLAND.

Publish'd, with a short Epistle to it, by a Person of Honour.

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TO THE
Reverend the Clergy
OF THE
Church of *ENGLAND.*

I Here Publiſh a few ſhort Directions, written by one of your Number, an Excellent Perſon, now Happy above; which if you will Peruſe and Practice, will tend to recover the Credit of the Miniſtry of the Church of England, *and ſo revive Serious Religion, almoſt Expiring, and alſo Advance the Riches and Trade of this Kingdom; for GOD always bleſſeth a Vertuous Kingdom with Temporal Bleſſings, and alſo Strengthens and Unites*

the Eſtabliſh'd Church, and Promotes Peace and Love among all Proteſtants, and brings much Glory to GOD, *which is the Sincere Prayer of,*

Your humble Servant, *&c.*

Serious and Seaſonable EXHORTATIONS To the Reverend Clergy of *ENGLAND*.

REVEREND BRETHREN of the Sacred Function, Pardon my Preſumption in offering to your Serious Conſideration, in order to excite your utmoſt Zeal and Diligence in the Diſcharge of your Miniſterial Truſt and Office, theſe following Serious Exhortations.

WE are Ambaſſadors for CHRIST, and Shepherds to our People, and ſet as Watchmen over our ſeveral Congregations. And,

I.

LET us receive the Admonition GOD gave the Prophet in *Ezek.* 33. 7, 8, 9. *So Thou Son of Man*, &c.

LET us warn the wicked from GOD's Mouth, according to his Word in the Holy Scriptures, of the Evil and Danger of Sin allowed and continued in, though ſecret, tho' counted little in the Eye of the World, informing them that Sin allowed is an Offence to God, a Slight put upon his Majeſty and Government, a Breach of his Law and Covenant, and muſt end in a dreadful Loſs and Miſery.

THIS is the Sum of the Warning we ſhould give. And we ſhould deliver it in ſuch a manner, that they that are warned by us, may believe us in earneſt, and that we think as we ſpeak.

AND our Warnings ſhould be attended with clear Inſtructions to them con-

concerning the *Credenda*, *Agenda*, and *Petenda*; and with Prayer in ſecret for direction in Compoſing our Sermons, as may beſt ſerve to awaken their Conſciences, and to prevail upon them to reform their Hearts and Lives.

And as alluring them to comply with our Solemn Admonitions, let us unfold to them their Miſerable Condition by Nature, the infinite Mercies of God to Sinners in the Covenant of Grace, the Merits of Chriſt, the mighty Favour of giving Grace and a New Heart, and not only accepting it,

II.

As a Goad in our Sides, to excite to great Diligence in our Miniſtry; let us conſider the Peril attending Negligence, the requiring the Blood of Periſhing Souls at our Hands, and reputing us as the worſt Sort of Murderers.

And this is ſo weighty a thing, and renders the Miniſtry ſo awful, that the beſt

beſt Preferment in *Europe* is not a ſufficient Temptation to an awaken'd Mind to undertake the Office.

But it may be ſaid, How comes it then to paſs that any engage in it?

Anſ. 1. Some few, like Primitive Men, undertake it with Underſtanding, and out of pure Zeal for the Service and Glory of God, and in Love to Souls; The Lord increaſe their Number.

2. The moſt of us, I fear, engage in it before we maturely conſider. And when we come to ſome Depth of conſidering, we find we cannot Retire, having put our Hand to the Plough, and ſo we grow Solicitous about managing the Office with Safety to our own Souls, and then we feel that no Maintenance is a Recompence for our Undertaking; and that only a Deſire to Glorifie God, and a Love to Souls, can Sweeten the Calling to us that is attended with ſo much Difficulty and Peril.

Were

WERE we only to perform the Common Offices, and preach ſo many times in a Year, there were no great Burden in this.

BUT when Conſcience awakens, and a Miniſter Studies, Preaches, and Prays, and viſits Solicitouſly, in expectation of paſſing an account with GOD, then the Miniſtry is weighty indeed, and the Miniſter had rather Dig for a Livelihood, if he might chuſe, than be a Paſtor to get Bread.

NOW in Conſideration of the Hazard attending Unfaithfulneſs and Negligence in our Office, let us implore Divine Aid, and gird up the Loins of our Minds, put forth our Strength in our Miniſtrations: And if we ſo do, we ſhall find very little time for Pleaſures; and the little Ambition of being reputed very Ingenious Men, will be Buried and Loſt in an Endeavour to be found Faithful.

III.

To diligence in our Miniſtry, let us add an Exemplary Converſation, ſhining as Lights in a Dark World, living in an Agreement with what we Read, and Pray, and Preach. For if this be wanting, though we could Preach as Angels, it will not Profit us in the great Day, as is evident from that Paſſage in St. *Mat.* 7. 22, 23. fit to be Engraven on the Fronts of our Studies, on our Desks and Pulpits, and much more upon our Hearts; *Many will ſay to me in that Day, Lord, we have Propheſied in thy Name; then will I ſay to them, Depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity.*

We ſhould lead, by Example, in the Ways of Righteouſneſs, Purity, Meekneſs, Charity, Humility, Devotion, and Forgiving, *&c.*

And that we may be Exemplary, let us Imitate our Bleſſed Lord and Redeemer.

MANY things in his Management are for our Imitation, and particularly his Purity, and Zeal in reproving Sin: None escaped his Reproofs. He reproved the Church of the *Jews* in general, the Capital City, *Jerusalem*, the Ecclesiasticks, and the Civil Power, Scribes and Pharises, and *Herod* himself, *Go tell that Fox.*

NOW since we hope in his Mercy, and wash in his Blood, and depend on his Merits, and glory in his Name, let us tread in his Steps.

IV.

AS an Attractive to Faithfulness and great Diligence in our Ministry, let us Contemplate the Safety and Reward that attends it. In thus doing we shall deliver our own Souls from lying down in Sorrow, from dwelling in Darkness, and with the Apostate, Infernal Spirits. And besides this, we

shall

ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament, as the Stars, and as the Sun, in the Kingdom of our Father.

In the Conſideration of theſe things, let us be Diligent, Stedfaſt, Unmovable, and abounding in our Miniſterial Work, that our Labour may not be in vain.

And let me add this Advice, That our Preaching be managed with reſpect to the prevailing Errors of our Times, to prevent our Congregations from being infected by them.

Deism is the taking Error among Men of Parts and Learning; and it gains among more ordinary People; ſo that we are in Danger of preſerving only Natural Religion, and letting go Supernatural and Divinely Revealed Scripture-Truths.

IF Care be not taken, Religion among us will be only Remembering our Creator, Forgetting our Redeemer and Comforter, and the Addreſſes in our Litany will go no farther than to *God the Father of Heaven.*

LET us then Preach the Divinity of CHRIST, the Incarnation of the Son of GOD, and ſhew our People, that leſs than One truly GOD, could not have been a ſufficient King, Prieſt, or Prophet, to the Church. And let us not fail to Open and Confirm to them the Doctrine of CHRIST's Satisfaction made for our Sins, by his being a real Sacrifice, made Sin, or a Sin-offering, for us.

TOO many in our Age Depreciate CHRIST, and account him only the moſt Excellent Man that ever was. And let us in a juſt Oppoſition, Magnifie CHRIST, and acquaint our Congregations, *that his Goings forth were from Everlaſting, that he is the Mighty God,*

and

and Everlasting Father: And that he did not Die only as a Martyr, bearing Testimony to Truth, but Dy'd charged with our Sins, bearing our Iniquities and Sufferings, and Atoning for them, as is abundantly declared in Scripture, and in the Communion-Office of our Church, and in some of the Collects.

In defence of the Christian Religion, let us Preach more of the Person, Natures, and Offices, of Christ, and of Justification, not by our best Works, but by him, and Faith in him, which is *Church of England* Doctrine.

Let us not stop in the Dictates of *Plutarch*, *Seneca*, and *Epictetus*, but directly Preach the Evangelical Truths concerning our Redeemer, and Redemption by him; and let our People know a true Faith is as needful to Salvation, as a good Life; in Opposition to a Growing, Spreading, Pernicious Error, That it matters not what Men Believe, provided they Live

Live a good Life; and that a Jew or a Turk, or an Heathen, are in as good a Condition as Christians, provided that they are not Debauch'd and Lewd in their Manners.

And that we may Stem the *Arian* and *Socinian* Tide, let us Preach much concerning the Holy Spirit, and shew our Congregations, he is God, and a Person distinct from Father and Son, though the same in Essence.

Let us shew them the Holy Spirit's Co-operation with Father and Son in the Works of Creation, Providence, Redemption, Sanctification, and Resurrection, his Offices with respect to the Church and People of God, being their Teacher, Sanctifier, Helper, Remembrancer, and Comforter, and that no good thing is done well without his Influence, Aid, and Assistance.

CONSIDERING our being Baptiz'd in the Name of the Holy Ghoſt, and that our Bodies are his Temples, and he Seals us to the Day of Redemption, we ſhould not in our Sermons be ſilent concerning the Holy Spirit.

THE Scripture ſpeaks much of the Holy Spirit, and therefore we ſhould ſpeak of him not a little; and the rather, that our Congregations may Pray with Underſtanding; *Take not thy Holy Spirit from us. Cleanſe the Thoughts of our Hearts by the Inſpiration of thy Holy Spirit. Send down thy Holy Spirit into our Hearts:* And that the Concluſion of ſeveral Prayers may be underſtood, and not be harder than Latin to them, *viz. Who Liveth and Reigneth with thee, and the Holy Spirit.*

AND if by much Preaching of CHRIST and the Holy Spirit the People be inured to Thoughts of, and De-

Dependance upon CHRIST, and the Holy Spirit, it will not be ſo eaſie to Deiſts to pervert them.

NOT that I would in the leaſt divert from Practical Preaching by what I have ſaid; for every Doctrine concerning CHRIST and the Holy Spirit may be improved in an Application to the Urging and Promoting Virtue and Godlineſs, as St. *Chryſoſtom*'s Expoſitions of Scripture are attended with his. ΗΘΙΚΟΝ.

AND aſſuredly, Exhortations to Piety and Holineſs in general, or to any particular Branch of Godlineſs, are rendred more lively by being grafted upon the Stock of ſome Evangelical Truth.

THIS was St. *Paul*'s Method in his Epiſtles to the *Romans*, *Galatians*, *Epheſians*, *Coloſſians*, and *Hebrews*, to inſiſt firſt upon ſome great Revealed Truths, as the Divinity of CHRIST,

or

or his Prieſthood, or Juſtification by Faith, or the like; and then bring in his Exhortations to Parents, Children, Maſters, Servants, Husbands, and Wives, to Live becoming the Goſpel, in all Holineſs.

We may then ſufficiently attend to our endeavouring the Reformation of our ſeveral Congregations, and yet Preach much concerning Christ, and the Holy Ghoſt. And we have great Patterns of it in our own Church, and may have great Help in it from the Writings of ſome of them of great Name, as Archbiſhop *Uſher*, Biſhop *Pearſon*, Dr. *Jackſon*, and others.

And as moving to this, it is a deplorable thing, that as *Britain bred* the Author of the *Pelagian* Hereſie, there ſhould now be ſo much Danger of the reviving *Arianiſm* in this *Iſland*.

Let us then uſe our Endeavours to keep up the great Doctrines of the Trinity,

nity, and Incarnation of the Son of GOD, and his Satisfaction, and Juſtification by him, and of the Impotency and Oppoſition of Nature to Faith and Godlineſs, and of our Need of the Aids of an Almighty Holy Spirit, by Preaching theſe things.

RELIGION and Godlineſs hath flouriſh'd under theſe Doctrines; and I verily believe Piety will decay where theſe Doctrines are forſaken, or not heeded. And we cannot do a better Service than by maintaining them in our Preaching by Scripture-Arguments, that it may appear we oppoſe *Socinianiſm* ex animo; and not only becauſe otherwiſe we cannot read the Church-Service, in which we have *Te Deum*, *Glor. Patri. Fil. Sp. Sanct.* and *Addreſſes to Chriſt*, *O Lamb of God*, *Son of* David, *have Mercy on us*, and the like.

AND I ſhall conclude to you, my Reverend Brethren, with my earneſt Wiſhes, that we may be endowed with

with Power from on High to Fulfill the Miniſtry we have received of the Lord, and to Adorn our Function, that we may Die with the Conſolations we have Miniſtred to ſuch as we have judged accepted of GOD in CHRIST.

FINIS.